Flooring Selection Impacts Risk and Severity of Injuries. As one of the leading causes of injury and death among people worldwide, falling is considered by the World Health Organization to be a public health hazard. But the problem is complicated because there are many social, physiological, and environmental factors that contribute to slips, trips, and falls in office buildings, schools, stores, restaurants, and healthcare facilities. According to the National Floor Safety Institute, floors and flooring materials contribute directly to more than 2 million fall injuries among people of all ages each year. And while people over the age of 65 are at the most risk of slipping, tripping, and falling, these accidents can happen to people of any age.

Insights on Wellness & Flooring: Safety

inform.





Slips. Trips. And Falls.

What is the Economic and Human Cost of the Problem? Falls are the number one cause of emergency room visits in the U.S. Fall-related injuries cost U.S. businesses almost \$18 billion a year, including loss of productivity, increased insurance premiums, and costs to train replacement workers. Direct costs to individuals are lost wages and out of pocket expenses for care. Individuals also may experience pain, anxiety, or depression as a result of a disabling fall injury. Of all deaths associated with falls, 60% involve people aged 75 years or older.

What About Flooring Causes Slips? A slip happens when there is too little friction or traction between feet and flooring, resulting in loss of balance. Perceived floor slipperiness before walking is considerably affected by lighting, floor, and surface conditions. A wet, soapy, hard surface such as vinyl flooring is more slippery than ice. Slip-resistance is a measure of surface traction. High-traction surfaces have been clinically proven to reduce up to 90% of slip and fall claims.



*WET, SOAPY SURFACE

https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/guide-to-the-ada-standards/ chapter-3-floor-and-ground-surfaces



than 0.4.

What About Flooring Causes Trips? A trip happens when the foot or lower leg hits an object and the upper body continues moving, resulting in loss of balance. Uneven surfaces and transitions between different types of flooring are thought to be the main source of trips caused by flooring, especially among adults over the age of 65. Other causes are freshly waxed floors, sloped walking surfaces, loose rugs or mats, and ramps without skid- or slip-resistant surfaces.

What About Flooring Causes Falls? A fall happens when a person is too far off their center of balance. It can occur at the same level as the walking surface or to a lower level. Glare from shiny hard surface flooring may also temporarily blind people with sensitive vision and increase the risk of falling. The severity of injury may also vary with flooring type. When compared to standard vinyl flooring, low impact flooring such as carpet has been shown to significantly reduce fall-related injuries among older people. Even with compliant (low-stiffness) flooring underneath, vinyl flooring has not been found to be effective at preventing serious fall-related injuries. Forty-six percent of people who fall on hard, shiny surfaces suffer injuries requiring medical attention, compared to 17% of people who fall on soft surfaces.

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